Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for enhancing venous return to the heart, the method comprising:

repetitively compressing the patient's chest;

delivering a positive pressure breath for about 0.5 seconds to about 2 seconds to a person suffering from low blood pressure or head trauma;

actively extracting respiratory gases from the person's airway following the positive pressure breath to create an intrathoracic vacuum to enhance venous return to the heart, wherein the intrathoracic vacuum lowers the person's intrathoracic pressure to about -1mm Hg to about -20mm Hg; and

repeating the steps of delivering positive pressure breaths and extracting respiratory gases.

2. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising interfacing an impedance threshold valve to the person's airway, wherein the threshold valve prevents airflow to the person's lungs when attempting to inspire until the threshold valve opens, thereby augmenting blood flow back to the heart.

3. (Original) A method as in claim 2, wherein the threshold valve is configured to open when the negative intrathoracic pressure exceeds about -7 cmH2O.

4. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising interfacing a flow limiting valve to the patient's airway and regulating the pressure or the volume of the positive pressure breath with the flow limiting valve.

5. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising interfacing a pressure source and a vacuum source to the person to deliver the positive pressure breath and to extract the respiratory gases.

6. (Original) A method as in claim 5, wherein the pressure source and the vacuum source comprise a compressible bag system.

7. (Original) A method as in claim 6, further comprising reconfiguring the compressible bag system to operate only as a pressure source.

8. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising exhausting the extracted respiratory gases to the atmosphere.

9. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising varying the duration of the positive pressure breaths or the extraction of the respiratory gases over time.

10. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising supplying supplemental oxygen to the person.

11. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising monitoring at least one physiological parameter of the person and varying the positive pressure breath or the extraction of respiratory gases based on the monitored parameter.

12. (Original) A method as in claim 11, wherein the physiological parameters are selected from a group consisting of end tidal CO2, oxygen saturation, blood pressure and cardiac output.

13. (Original) A method as in claim 11, further comprising varying the amplitude of the positive pressure breath or the extraction of respiratory gases.

14. (Original) A method as in claim 6, wherein the respiratory gases are extracted upon recoiling of the compressible bag system.

15. (Currently amended) A method as in claim 1, ~~wherein the intrathoracic vacuum lowers the person's intrathoracic pressure to about -1mm Hg to about -20mm Hg, and~~ wherein the intrathoracic vacuum is in the range from about -2mm Hg to about -60mm Hg.

16. (Original) A method as in claim 1, further comprising measuring the volume of the positive pressure breath.

17. (Original) A method as in claim 11, further comprising transmitting information on the measured parameter to a remote receiver.

Claims 18-19 (canceled).

Claims 20-34 (canceled).

Claim 35 (canceled).

36. (New) A method for treating a person with low blood pressure or head trauma who needs assisted ventilation, the method comprising:

delivering a positive pressure breath for about 0.5 seconds to about 2 seconds to a person suffering from low blood pressure or head trauma;

actively extracting respiratory gases from the person's airway following the positive pressure breath to create an intrathoracic vacuum to enhance venous return to the heart, wherein the intrathoracic vacuum lowers the person's intrathoracic pressure to about -1mm Hg to about -20mm Hg; and

repeating the steps of delivering positive pressure breaths and extracting respiratory gases.